

Finance Committee Meeting January 6th 2011

Meeting was called to order at 7:05PM. Present were Mr. Zukauskas, Mr. Yohalem, Ms. Mielke, Mr. Imberman, Mr. Herrick, Mr. Dowling and Mrs. Spaulding. Guests included Ms. Tara White, Mrs. Louise Yohalem, Vice Chairman of the Cultural Council, Mr. Owen Hoberman, Treasurer of the Cultural Council, Mr. Peter Marks, Highway Superintendent, and Mr. Scott Farrell, Police Chief.

Minutes for December 16th were accepted as read, Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Dowling 2nd passed unanimously.

Mr. Marks presented a written synopsis on the condition of the Grader. The grader is 17 years old with about 9,000 hours on it.

"As of December 31st 2010, monies available in the machinery Expense Account are \$35,397.68, which is 40.30% of the appropriated amount of \$59,800.00. Repair costs for parts (for the grader) are \$22,728.11. Labor to install parts is done "in house". This will leave \$12,969.57 in budget with six months to go in the fiscal year.

We have over 40 miles of dirt roads in New Marlborough (where) a grader is needed. However a new grader would cost over \$300,000.00, with that in mind I notified the selectmen, showed them the worn parts and received the "OK" to get the new parts and do the repairs".

Mr. Marks stated that after the repairs are completed the grader should be in good condition as the repairs are related to the drive shaft and the engine appears to be in good condition. He was questioned about the condition of the truck that rolled over on the County Road. He stated that it had not sustained any damage and it was noted that the highway had placed large sticks along that piece of road to prevent anyone from repeating the "roll over". He said hopefully that the highway department was doing regular maintenance on its vehicles and there should not be any other expensive repairs needed!

Mrs. Yohalem came to request that the town continue to support the Cultural Council's budget of \$1000. This money is basically "seed money" that is used to send out mailings. The Cultural Council supports activities that benefit the children of the town, the Library, The Village Associations and other worthy town causes. It is totally staffed with volunteers and contributes greatly to the community.

The **Cultural Council 50640.01** requested the same amount of money as last year \$1000, motion was made by Mr. Zukauskas 1st, and Mr. Herrick 2nd passed with Mr. Yohalem abstaining.

Mr. Farrell came to discuss the police budget. Last year Mr. Farrell had shared with the committee the fact that the present police cruiser would need to be replaced during the 2012 budget year. When discussing the purchase of a new cruiser Mr. Farrell stated that he had discussed the possibility of increasing the size and the scope of the police department. At present the level of police needed activities are growing within the town. And the police coverage is only about 30 hours a week. The State Police provides coverage in any major incident. If the selectmen choose to

support the growth of the present police department then the purchase of a new vehicle while continuing to run the existing cruiser (which has four wheel drive) would be practical. The purchase of a new vehicle is compounded because the equipment on the old cruiser will not fit on a new cruiser, though the base price of a new vehicle might be between \$22,000 and \$25,000 the other equipment will have to be purchased new and increase the cost of the vehicle. The old cruiser has four wheel drive, and the choice of a new cruiser could be a Ford, Dodge or Chevrolet. Added to this Ford is expected to produce a AWD cruiser this coming year, but Mr. Farrell is apprehensive about purchasing one of these because it will be the first year that it is being manufactured. Although Mr. Dowling noted that it would come with appropriate guarantees!

Mr. Yohalem cautioned that if the Police Department were to be increased the increase in costs would not be isolated to the vehicles alone. Mr. Zukauskas remarked that if the vehicle was new some of the costs (i.e. tires would be less) but the estimated cost of gasoline per gallon may be over optimistic. When questioned about the value of the old cruiser, Mr. Farrell stated that it would only yield a few hundred dollars. The Committee thanked Mr. Farrell for coming and sharing his concerns about the size of the department and the purchase of the new vehicle.

The Committee then began to review some of the budget requests. Mr. Zukauskas stated that he had planned to establish a spread sheet to facilitate the budgetary process, but he noticed that on some of our approved requests the FY 2011 Budget amounts were not correct. He hopes that he will have time to check these figures prior to the next meeting when he will have the spread sheet upon which the members can work.

The Committee then looked at the Expenses part of the Police budget and after some scrutiny it was placed in the pile to be approved leaving the "salary" part of the expenses on hold until the Selectmen have a change to peruse it.

Police Department Expenses 60210.99 (\$14,920) now requesting [\$16,365] was passed with the other police budgets held.

Tax Title {Treasurer} 10149.00 (\$1,500) now requesting [\$3,000] *{five titles are being processed and the funds will come back to the town eventually.}*

Board of Appeals 10176.00 (\$600) now requesting [\$600].

Cemetery Officers Salaries 20491.00 (\$400) now requesting [\$400]

Cemetery Expenses 20491.02 (\$1,300) now requesting [\$1,300]

Tree Warden's Salary 60294.00 (\$1,000) now requesting [\$1,000]

Tree Work 60294.01 (\$10,000) now requesting [\$10,000]

Berkshire County Retirement 90911.00 (\$82,925) now requesting [\$67,440] *{lower because the Highway Department was one man less this year.}*

Building Inspector Expenses 60241.02 (\$2,476) now requesting [\$2,476]

Assessors General Expense 10141.01 (\$3,700) now requesting [\$2,900]

Assessors Tax Map Updates 10141.55 (\$2,900) now requesting [\$2,900]

Assessors' Revaluations 10142.00 (\$15,000) now requesting [\$15,000]

The above budgets were passed Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd passed unanimously.

Council on Aging Expenses 70541.01 (\$150) now requesting [\$150]
Council on Aging Transportation 70541.00 (\$5,497) now requesting [\$5,497]
Animal Expense 60293.77 (\$1,660) now requesting [\$1,660]
were passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing, Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd.

Firemen's Dues 60220.44 (\$200) now requesting [\$200]
Fire Protection 60220.00 (\$58,000) now requesting [\$59,950]
Fire Department Clerical 60220.88 (\$1,500) now requesting [\$1,500]
Were passed, Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Dowling 2nd passed unanimously.

The following budgets were on hold or remain on hold:-

Police Salaries 60210.07
Firefighter's Stipend 60220.05
Treasurer's Expense 10147.44
New Marlborough Rescue Expenses 60291.77
Assessor's Clerk 10141.02 {salaried item}
Assessor's Computer Contingency 10141.44
Assessor's Salaries 10141.00
Berkshire Visiting Nurse 70522.00

The meeting adjourned at 8:23PM with the next meeting scheduled for January 20th 2011 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary